

THE SENTINEL



OFFICIAL SAFETY NEWSLETTER OF CIVIL AIR PATROL

Safety Event

In accordance with the directive from Brig Gen Courter, all wings will plan and execute a safety event for their wing. All regions must also conduct a safety event for their region staff members. This event must be completed no later than 12 Sep 07.

Each wing/region event will be tailored for the individual wing/region and may take the form of a discussion, activity, or safety down-day. The content and style will be at the discretion of the individual wing/region commander.

Col John Tilton, CAP/SE

Do Accidents Just Happen?

Many people believe the statement "accidents happen" but is this true? Studies show that 90% of all mishaps are the results of the actions of one or more people.

In accident prevention planning we use a method of analyzing tasks in order to find, evaluate, reduce or eliminate hazards. In many cases, we must accept a certain level of risk. Hazards come with the emergency services mission. As CAP members, we are responsible to identify these hazards and find a way to reduce their effect on our operation. If the hazard is inclement weather we can dress and equip ourselves appropriately

or delay the task until the weather improves.

The acceptance of a high risk must be justified by the mission. Each member must be aware of the problems, the alternatives and the reason for accepting any risk. Although our training and equipment makes us able to transverse many inaccessible places, you must be the final decision maker as to what level of hazard you are willing to be exposed to in order to achieve the goal. Saving lives is one of our missions. We must perform that mission with a minimum of risk to our lives in order to save others.

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Look Ma, No Hands!

Can you remember a time showing off in front of your mom, or someone else you were trying to impress, by riding your bicycle and yelling "Look ma, no hands"! What was most likely going through your mom's mind at that moment was fear, anxiety, and concern you would fall and get hurt. "Why would she feel that way?" you may think while riding around with no hands on the handle bars? She could see you were not in total control and were increasing your chances of crashing your bike, falling off and getting hurt. So how might this relate to flying an airplane?

The key word here is control, both mentally and physically, when operating an aircraft. Recently there were two news helicopter accidents within days of each other. The fact that each had a very different outcome is, I believe, reason to examine the lessons for us when piloting an aircraft. The first accident happened in the Phoenix, Arizona area and involved two helicopters following an automobile being chased by police cars. The helicopters worked for different TV news channels, each trying to get the story for their respective stations. The pilots in both news helicopters were also the reporters. They each carried a camera person to manage the airborne camera.

This mishap has created a major discussion among helicopter safety managers about the increased risk and hazards associated with flying helicopters and news reporting at the same time. Many have long believed this was a formula for disaster and the terrible accident in Arizona has heightened the awareness of those concerns. We have all heard that the pilots were great pilots, trained well with lots of hours and were good guys. So why did this accident happen? The investigation is still

ongoing, but the most obvious answer is "control". Who is flying the aircraft while the excitement and pressure to get the news story is taking place? Not the pilots when their objective as a news reporter becomes primary and their responsibility as a pilot becomes secondary. With the three dimensional challenge of flying in crowded airspace becomes secondary to the requirement of being a reporter, some very basic aeronautical needs are neglected with, in this case, disastrous results.

The other news helicopter accident happened in Dallas, Texas only a few days later with a better ending. While flying the morning traffic reports this helicopter suffered a major mechanical failure and was forced to land in a remote area south of Dallas. Everyone walked away with only some minor injuries. The difference here was the pilot was just the pilot and not a news reporter. He was able to keep his flying skills as his only focus and maintain control of the entire situation with no distractions or other concerns, like getting the news story and thus becoming the story.

As mission pilots we have the same responsibility to maintain control of the aircraft at all times and stay focused on flying the mission; period! That is why CAP trains observers and scanners to do the job of searching or managing the equipment, to conduct the mission while the pilot's sole responsibility is to fly the airplane. The pilot, not the crew or mission ground managers, makes all decisions concerning the safe operation of the flight from the go/no-go decision to where and how the plane is to be operated. The pilot is not the observer or scanner and is expected to safely control the airplane during its mission profile.

You are all trained and have varying degrees of experience. I am sure you

are all “good guys”. The lessons learned from these helicopter accidents should be a reminder that flying is very challenging and requires all of our skills and attention to apply our experience and decision making skills; to operate safely within the environment and mission profile with which we are tasked. Always

remember the basic comment your primary flight instructor drilled into your head, “Fly the airplane.” If that doesn’t work, try remembering your mom yelling back “Put your hands back on those handle bars.”

Lt Col Larry Mattiello, CAP

Lyme Disease

Many members, especially cadets, participate in CAP in outdoor environments. One concern during such activities is Lyme Disease. Once confined to the Northeastern United States, reported cases of Lyme disease have shown up in almost every state in recent years. Some heightened areas of growing cases include the Great Lakes states, Florida, Texas and California, while many other States have reported new cases.

So what is Lyme Disease? The following is from the Center for Disease Control, in Atlanta.

Lyme disease is caused by the bacterium *Borrelia Burgdorferi* and is transmitted to humans by the bite of infected blacklegged ticks. Typical symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue, and a rash called erythema migrans. If left untreated, infection can spread to the joints, the heart, and the

nervous system. Lyme disease is diagnosed based on symptoms, physical findings such as the classic rash around the bite area, and the possibility of exposure to infected ticks. Laboratory testing is helpful in the later stages of the disease to ascertain the severity of the disease or the stage to which it has progressed.

Most cases of Lyme Disease can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics. Steps to prevent Lyme disease include using insect repellent, checking for and removing ticks promptly, landscaping, and integrated pest management.

For more information search on-line for Lyme Disease and read about this preventable but disabling disease. As with any outdoor activity, being alert and informed is the first defense to staying safe and healthy.

Lt Col Larry Mattiello, CAP

Summary of CAPFs 78 Received at NHQ CAP for July 2007

Aircraft

Tail tie down scraped ground while practicing no flap landings.

Glider wing struck trailer while being towed.

Unsecured control lock hit right baggage window during turbulence.

Wingtip hit hangar during taxi.

Right wing tip struck a chain link fence post.

Blanik glider pulled into another glider while being towed.

Aircraft contacted another aircraft after landing.

Glider wing wheel contacted runway damaging wheel.

Two aircraft came into contact while being moved inside a hangar.

Vehicle

Left rear corner of bumper scratched while backing vehicle.

Left rear quarter panel struck gas pump island.

Vehicle scraped against protruding metal object on concrete abutment.

Bodily Injury

SM received 2nd degree burns from sterno can.

SM struck head on prop while fueling aircraft.

Cadet knocked to ground.

Cadet received lacerations to forehead, nose and upper lip by the end of an ext cord.

Cadet hit head on upper bunk.

Cadet received 2nd degree burns by backing into a barbeque drum.

Cadet sprayed in left eye while using Betco floor cleaner.

Safety Officers and Responsibility

While preparing this month's Sentinel I was informed of the terrible accident and loss of life to three of our members in the Wyoming Wing, who were performing a humanitarian mission. It is always sad when CAP experiences such a tragic loss. The investigation is ongoing and we will learn more about the causes and lessons to be learned from this accident as the investigation progresses.

What I am reminded of is that CAP directives provide safety officers with certain responsibilities and requirements for doing this job. The question that each aviation accident brings to mind is, "What

could we have done differently or better to prevent the accident from happening?" I personally feel the responsibility to make sure we are getting the safety message out to all members and that it is truly understood by all that hear the message. Are we preaching just to the choir and failing to spread the safety word? Is there any way we can improve our procedures and processes to spread the safety message more successfully? This is the question all safety managers need to ask when an accident happens and in the CAP, everyone is a safety manager.

Lt Col Larry Mattiello, CAP